

INTRODUCTION OF THE "MORTGAGE AND RENTAL ASSISTANCE RESTORATION ACT OF 2008"

**HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 2, 2008*

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, today, along with Representative MELANCON, I am re-introducing "The Mortgage and Rental Assistance Restoration Act of 2008."

My bill would reauthorize the Mortgage and Rental Assistance Act, MRA, which was discontinued by the Disaster Mitigation Act, effective May 2002. The MRA provides mortgage or rental payments to people who suffer a loss of income due to a federally declared disaster such as a hurricane or terrorist attack. Without a job, most people would be unable to keep their homes due to the financial burdens of mortgages or rents. The MRA provides cover for both homeowners and renters.

After the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, individuals who required temporary housing assistance relied upon the MRA, included in the Stafford Act, for aid. Under the MRA program, many were eligible for grants to repair homes to a habitable condition, or to obtain mortgage or rental payment assistance to prevent foreclosures or evictions.

The MRA program was a crucial component to help victims of the September 11 attack in my home State of New York. However, in 2005, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the MRA was not available for mortgage or rental assistance. As a result many people who would have been eligible for mortgage or rental assistance were unable to receive it. This was unfair and detrimental to the recovery process.

The United States Government has a responsibility to help communities recover from unpredictable disasters and help citizens keep from losing their homes. The MRA program helps provide stability during unstable times, and that is why it must be reauthorized.

THE OCCASION OF THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF RID (REMOVE INTOXICATED DRIVERS)

**HON. MICHAEL R. McNULTY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 2, 2008*

Mr. McNULTY. Madam Speaker, I wish to express my congratulations to RID (Remove Intoxicated Drivers) on its 30th anniversary. RID was the first organization to be effective in lowering DWI deaths in New York State.

RID is the oldest anti-DWI national organization in the U.S. It was formed in 1978 in Schenectady, New York, by Doris Aiken, the current president. RID began its battle against drunk driving after the deaths of Karen and Timothy Morris, 17 and 19, the only Morris children, caused by an intoxicated 22 year old on December 4, 1977.

RID's mission, then and now, is to deter impaired driving and teen binge drinking. RID educates the public about the impact of abusive alcohol use on life and health with materials, public awareness campaigns, and intense media interactions.

RID has chapters and/or coordinators in 41 States. RID relies heavily on volunteers. RID has never accepted funding from the alcohol industry or other special interests that do not support its goals. They have no paid workers in the field and do not hire professional fundraisers; 90 percent of all funds are spent on programs and 10 percent on administration and fundraising.

Madam Speaker, I ask all Members of the House to recognize and applaud the work of Doris Aiken and volunteers of RID. Their dedication and determination to end drunken driving and alcohol abuse is an excellent example of the power in each and every one of us to effect change in our communities and the Nation. May they continue to provide service and compassion for many years to come.

REMEMBERING THE TRAGEDY OF HALABJA 20 YEARS LATER

**HON. BOB FILNER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 2, 2008*

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker and colleagues, 20 years ago, on March 16, 1988, Saddam Hussein launched the largest chemical weapons attack ever used against civilians in the Kurdish town of Halabja. The deadly cocktail killed an estimated 5,000 residents. Saddam's regime held the gruesome distinction of being the first in history to attack its own population with poison gas.

The brutal attack on Halabja was part of a larger campaign, Anfal, which means "the Spoils," to annihilate the Kurds of Iraq. It has been estimated that between 50,000 and 200,000 Kurds were killed during Anfal. Many died in mass executions; thousands more were simply "disappeared" by the regime.

Halabja symbolizes the suffering of the Kurdish people. The plight of Halabja's survivors continues today because of a lack of remediation. Little or no decontamination has been done and the health consequences of exposure to chemicals including mustard gas, sarin, tabun and VX continue to bring death and destruction to Halabja and surrounding villages. Children are born with deformities and cancers, and other diseases caused by genetic mutations are occurring at much higher rates than in other areas.

The world has historically failed to recognize what happened at Halabja. As we reflect on the tragedy of Halabja, it is important to look to the future, and we must honor Halabja's victims and stand in solidarity with those who survive.

INTRODUCTION OF A BILL EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THAT PUBLIC SERVANTS SHOULD BE COMMENDED FOR THEIR DEDICATION AND CONTINUED SERVICE TO THE NATION DURING PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK, MAY 5 THROUGH 11, 2008

**HON. DANNY K. DAVIS**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 2, 2008*

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, the week of May 5 through May 11, 2008, marks the 24th anniversary of Public Service Recognition Week, PSRW. PSRW is a week set aside to commemorate the hard work, dedication, and sacrifice made by our Nation's Federal, State and local government employees. I am proud to once again introduce this resolution honoring public service and public servants.

Public Service Recognition Week offers an opportunity for all Americans to both recognize and learn about the significant contributions public sector employees make on a daily basis to our local communities, States, and country. Whether fighting crime, educating future generations, or serving on the front line to protect our Nation, public servants touch every aspect of our lives.

While Public Service Week lasts only 7 days, I believe that the contributions and sacrifices of public servants ought to be recognized and appreciated throughout the entire year. By honoring public servants we show younger generations the importance of public service and inspire them to consider entering the field, whether on the Federal, State, or local level of government.

We, as a nation, have a responsibility to honor the commitment of government employees and to recognize that our country runs on their diligence and hard work. The commemoration of Public Service Recognition Week stands as a reminder to every citizen that the sacrifices and contributions made by American public employees is what makes our country a more perfect union and our Government one that is truly of the people, for the people and by the people.

CESAR CHAVEZ'S BIRTHDAY

**HON. AL GREEN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 2, 2008*

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, this Monday, March 31, 2008, marked the 81st birthday of the late Cesar Chavez, a national hero who devoted his life to fighting for civil rights for all Americans. Today, I join the millions of Americans who will honor this migrant farmworker, labor organizer, and champion of social justice for his many contributions.

Cesar Chavez was a civil rights and human rights leader who learned about the importance of justice early in his life. After graduating from the eighth grade, a young Cesar Chavez went to work in the fields as a migrant farmworker to support his family. In 1962,